

# AMONG the NEW BOOKS

## WITH GEORGE GRIMES

### Twelve Recent Biographies of Men Vital in Many Ways

**THE LIFE AND STRANGE AND SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF DANIEL BOONE.** By Paul Dotin. (Macaulay, \$3.50.)

**VOLTAIRE.** The incomparable infidel. By Joseph Lewis. (Fremont Press, \$1.)

**DOWN BYRNE:** Bard of Armagh. By Thurston Macaulay. (Century, \$2.)

**AUDACIOUS AUDUBON.** By Edward A. Muschamp. (Brentano's, \$3.50.)

**AN EPOCH AND A MAN:** Martin Van Buren and His Times. By Dennis Tilden Lynch. (Liveright, \$5.)

**THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON.** By Dimitri S. Merezhkovsky. (Dutton, \$3.50.)

**PETER THE GREAT.** By Stephen Graham. (Simon and Schuster, \$3.)

**ALBERT, KING OF THE BELGIANS.** By Evelyn Graham. (Dodd, Mead, \$5.)

**PAGANINI OF GENOVA.** By Lillian Day. (Macaulay, \$3.50.)

**THE RAVEN:** A Life Story of Sam Houston. By Marquis James. (Bobbs, Merrill, \$5.)

**JOHN BROWN:** The Making of a Martyr. By Robert Penn Warren. (Payson and Clarke, \$5.)

**FREDERICK THE GREAT.** By Margaret Goldsmith. (Paper Books, 75 cents.)

These dozen biographies are listed together, because they are typical of the interest of present day readers in commanding figures of the past and present, for biography seems not to lose its interest and its lure, despite its great popularity for the past year or so. Everyone who can write seems to be devoting part of his time to the life of someone great or near-great, past or present. New facts are being dredged up, new interpretations of character given, until it seems that those who walked this earth, animated by some divine spark that lifted them above their fellows, will be completely analyzed, explained and essayed.

Now every one of the biographies here listed will have its appeal to a group of readers. The literary-minded will turn first to the stories of DeFoe and Donn Byrne. Figures of different epochs and of different types were they. The one is known to most of us, alas, as only the author of a book we consider an excellent adventure story for boys, "Robinson Crusoe." The other, whose untimely death is still fresh in memory, was a weaver of exquisite and stirring romances.

The period in which DeFoe was a writer was really his decline; earlier in life he had been, first a merchant, then a politician.

Paul Dotin is a Frenchman who has been painstaking, but not prosy, in his work on the life of DeFoe. He has been able to comprehend the amazing versatility of the man, to palliate his moral lapses, to appreciate his business acumen, and to appraise his skill as a writer. The man who could propose modern bankruptcy, who could advise King William, who could inaugurate, in a measure, modern journalistic technique, knew great success and great failure; and indeed, it was to retrieve failure that he wrote, in the final period of his life, his immortal books.

The Byrne book is by one who loved his friend, and the biography not only tells of the life of the bard of Armagh, but also contains an extremely valuable critical consideration of his novels. He wrote beautiful tales, but he had far to go to become a great writer, and death by accident cut him off. Because it is so pleasant to read his books, however, it is good to have so fair and stimulating a story of the man as Mr. Macaulay has written.

The little Voltaire book is by a man who appreciates the infidel. Joseph Lewis grows highly indignant over the state of morality, liberty, and ecclesiastical life when Voltaire appeared on the scene, and so his little book is as much an attack upon the bigotry of that and later days, as it is a document concerned with Voltaire.

Mr. Muschamp, with his "Audacious Audubon," has done his best to make the artist and naturalist and historian live again for us. But while paying full attention to the extraordinary genius of the man, and telling in lively fashion of his splendid wife and his courage in overcoming obstacles, he does not quite make, for me, Audubon to live.

Marquis James and Dennis Tilden Lynch are two extremely competent writers. Consequently their two biographies, both of which deal with men active in significant epochs of American history, are valuable as stories to lend one a better appreciation of the things that went to make up the America we know today.

Martin Van Buren suffers the fate of all presidents who follow in the steps of the very great, or very sensational statesman. He followed Andrew Jackson, and his story was necessarily dimmed by the greater force and force of his patron. Yet Van Buren had a most romantic career; he was a politician of great shrewdness, a statesman of brilliant attainments. He destroyed, as president, a corrupt banking system; he retired then, to lead, bravely and vigorously, the fight against slavery, and he unsuccessfully ran for the presidency as a freeholder, on practically the same platform on which Lincoln was later triumphantly elected.

Sam Houston was one of the most engaging figures in American history. Somehow his story seems to contain all that is full of vigorous adventure in the formation of this land. His rise to the governorship of Tennessee, his marriage to Eliza Allen and their inexplicable parting after 11 weeks of honeymoon, his departure for the west and the stirring story of his building of the republic of Texas; are



Some of Ward Lynd's woodcuts from "God's Man"



but chapters of a life full of mystery and enchantment.

To the unfolding of the story Mr. James has brought skill. His style is direct, vigorous, charming. He cites his authority. His book is well illustrated, and carefully indexed. It is a fine achievement.

Napoleon, to Merezhkovsky, is the child of destiny; his life corresponds with the rising, full vigor, and setting of the sun. His life of Napoleon is lively, fascinating, told in an exciting sweep and rush which compresses, within a few paragraphs, what a less skilled writer would need pages to relate. It is an interesting biography to have.

Peter the Great was a man of destiny of a different type. Mr. Graham goes into careful detail about the man whose life was a contrast of public achievement and private agony; who brought civilization to Moscow and in himself epitomized the barbarian. It is a personal narrative that is here told, of a czar who ruled in blood, and yet who brought his people along the path of destiny in tremendous leaps.

Another conqueror was Frederick the Great. Margaret Goldsmith's story is illustrated with reproductions of quaint and stimulating etchings, and she has managed to give, in a book that will not take an hour to read, a comprehensive and fair story of the life of the man who set Germany on its path of empire that met with so abrupt a halt in the world war.

Evelyn Graham manages to brush aside the veils that conceal kings of the present day, and to tell things that make them less puppets of royalty than men of blood. His King Albert is heroic, as we have come to believe the leader of the Belgians in the war was heroic. The book is primarily a war biography; it relates scenes and incidents that throw new light upon the war and its conduct from the allied side, and it gives us a pleasant story of a monarch who keeps popular in this day when kings totter on their thrones.

Miss Day is the first modern writer to attempt a biography of the great virtuoso, Paganini; a book that appears after three years of research. A man of many contradictions, he seemed to rejoice in possession of every extreme of character which might be classed as an artistic temperament. Miss Day's book is exceptionally well illustrated with reproductions of contemporary prints.

John Brown was the zealot of abolition; the story of his life, the facts of his dramatic private warfare, and his capture and execution, are important Americana. Mr. Warren has given his biography great wealth of detail, and has attempted to trace carefully the mental course of the man who was to be a nation. Without being brilliant, the result is a book that is solid.

One way for Commander Eckenker to discourage smoking on the Graf would be for him to equip his Zeppelin with those dashboard cigar lighters.—Judge.

### Cullen Shows Growing Power in New Poems

**THE BLACK CHRIST.** By Countee Cullen. (Harper's, \$2.50.)

Mr. Cullen, the Negro poet, grows in power with each volume of verse. His talent is full, demonstrated with the title poem in this book. It tells of a religious experience, built on the usual black tragedy. A Negro is slain by the mob—for another's crime—then, by a miracle he comes to life again. There is deep force, magnificent feeling in this poem; much beauty. For the vigor of the writing, read this bit:

"Lynch him! Lynch him!" O savage cry,  
Why should you echo, "Crucify!"  
One sought, sleek-tongued, to pacify  
Them with slow talk of trial, law,  
Established court; the dripping maw  
Would not be wheeled from its prey.  
Out of the past I heard him say,  
"So be it then; have then your way;  
But not by me shall blood be spilt;  
I wash my hands clean of this guilt."  
This was an echo of a phrase  
Uttered how many million days  
Gone by?  
Water may cleanse the hands  
But what shall scour the soul  
that stands  
Accused in heaven's sight?"

The decorations by Charles Cullen are adequate to the book.

### Joseph and Brethren

**CORN IN EGYPT.** By C. E. Bechofer Roberts. (Bobbs, Merrill, \$2.50.)

The biblical story of Joseph, done as a modern novel, but with no violation of the account as given in holy writ, is this book. It is fresh, amusing, full of sustained interest, and I doubt not, true to its hero and his day. The cruelty of Joseph's brethren, the dramatic story of his own rise from slavery to the position of treasurer in Egypt; his encounter with Potiphar's wife; the intrigues of the court, all these make a lively, convincing yarn.

### Wes Kerr's Book

**THE SAVING SENSE.** By W. B. Kerr. (Acorn Press, Omaha.)

This happily conceived book is made up of 10 selections from the writing of W. B. Kerr, the late Omaha newspaper man, with an appreciative and tender introduction by Keene Abbott. "The Saving Sense" refers, of course, to that humor which was Mr. Kerr's, and which lightened his sentences and paragraphs, and which endeared him to his friends. The book is illustrated by B. W. Depew, and his drawings have captured the spirit of the stories.

### A Wordless Novel; Lynd Ward Tells Story in Woodcuts

**GOD'S MAN.** By Lynd Ward. (Cape and Smith, \$3.)

The first American novel to appear with the story told entirely in woodcuts, is "God's Man."

It is a book of great beauty, for Mr. Ward is an artist of power, and his woodcuts have been given the fitting setting of fine paper and excellent printing and binding. The book would make a much appreciated Christmas gift.

The story that is told in these more than a hundred pages is that of an artist who goes to the city, and there meets disillusion in the fields of commerce and of love. Each one who "reads" the book may get a different meaning, so I will not spoil anyone's pleasure by going into detail of my own interpretation.

There are, from first to last, but 10 words of printed type. These are the headings of the five divisions of the book—The Brush, The Mistress, The Brand, The Wife, The Portrait.

One needs no technical knowledge, of the woodcut to know that here is great artistry.

### Reading Between Lines

Best sellers of other days, as the Omaha Public library reminds us, include Uncle Tom's Cabin, 1852; Ten Nights in a Bar Room, 1855; East Lynne in 1861; Adventures of Tom Sawyer, 1876; Prisoner of Zenda, 1894; Richard Carvel, 1899; The Jungle, 1906; Graustark, 1913; Winning of Barbara Worth, 1913; Freckles, 1914; Seventeen, 1916 . . . Edna Phillips, who is 68, was married to Miss Robina Webb at Exeter, England, October 17. . . . Sinclair Lewis is living in Vermont, writing short stories "until I get up enough energy to begin a new novel." . . . Durward Grinstead, author of "Elva," has resigned as vice-consul in the American foreign service, and sailed from Hamburg, Germany, for home. . . . Richard Aldington, author of "The Death of a Hero," has had three proposals of marriage and an offer to go into the movies, since his book became a definite success. . . . Sumner N. Blossom, editor of Popular Science Monthly, has become supervising editor of the American Magazine to succeed Merle Crowell, who resigned because of ill health. . . . "A Farewell to Arms" is leading the fiction best sellers. . . . Warner Babson's real name is Samuel Hopkins Adams.

### In the Modern Library

The four newest titles of The Modern Library, maintaining the interesting standard of these limp-cover books at 95 cents, are Havelock Ellis' "The Dance of Life," Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," Herman Sudermann's "The Song of Songs" and "An Anthology of American Negro Literature."

Havelock Ellis has written a new introduction to his book, "The Canterbury Tales" are given in the version of Walter W. Skeat. The Sudermann book is unabridged. The Negro literature anthology is edited by V. F. Calverton, and includes the writings of such Negroes as Booker T. Washington, Walter White, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen and others.

## The Evil That Gossips Do Lives After Them

BY DORIS BLAKE

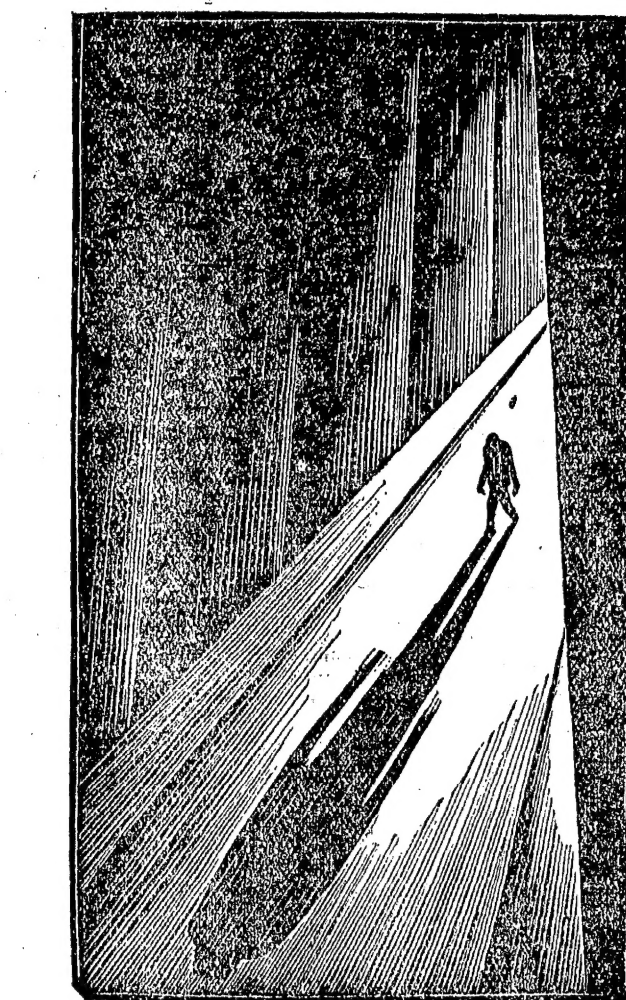
AS A PROTECTION against the attacks on personal rights by what some one calls those "physical hijackers in the field of uplift, public welfare, and so on," a Mind-Your-Own-Business week is suggested.

Following a recently disclosed incident the idea occurs that the suggestion might be applied with excellent results to more personal affairs than was in the mind of one suggesting the Mind-Your-Own-Business week. His concern was the busybodies who operate in connection with governmental, state and church affairs; ours with those who interfere in the affairs of young couples, couples not so young, with a next door neighbor's domestic life, or with relatives whose business should be granted the privilege of being their own.

For every public "reformer" whose motives are less uplifting than he would have the world believe, there are a hundred mean spirited persons waging assaults under the guise of love and friendship.

An incident disclosed recently nearly resulted in the loss of a job for the innocent man involved, the loss of her promising future outlook with said innocent husband for the young wife. The bright spot in the affair was the severance forever of a friendship with the female hijacker whose talebearing precipitated the near domestic tragedy. It was a Booth Tarkington episode of a venomous and envious woman working on an unsophisticated girl-wife until the young wife took herself and her unworthy suspicions to her husband's employer, begging for the dismissal of a girl in the office.

It was the same girl in the office, a girl of unimpeachable character, who saved the job for the young husband. But the impression gathered by said employer of the domestic background of the new, young executive still remains an unfavorable one. And any one aware of big business methods understands the value to an ambitious young man of a favorable impression of his domestic life by the heads of his organization. So important is this phase of business progress with some institutions that there is conducted in a perfectly quiet social way an investigation of home backgrounds where advance is on the boards for employees.



We doubt the efficacy of a week set aside to the cause of minding one's own business. Nevertheless, we can visualize a perfect Utopia where the week properly indulged, by the end of a seven-day period of fasting and abstinence from busybody pursuits, at least one would be made consciously aware of the active part minding other people's business plays in his and her life. And that might be a valuable step toward reform.

Suppose instead of putting on bonnet and shawl or its equivalent in the modern busybody's attire

ture of herself that never before occurred.

Not all trouble makers are vicious. A passion for gossip, excitement, may be the urge. Invariably, however, the female hijacker (we like the application) is a woman of shallow mind, with more time on her hands than she knows how to apply profitably.

IN THE WORLD of actively engaged women there is less of the sort of thing we are talking about than in quarters not regulated by consistent working hours. Not

### More About the War; Two Prize Novels, Two from Abroad

**GOD HAVE MERCY ON US!** By William T. Scanlon. (Houghton, Mifflin, \$2.50.)

**"IT'S A GREAT WAR!"** By Mary Lee. (Houghton, Mifflin, \$3.)

**CLASS OF 1902.** By Ernst Glaeser. (Viking, \$2.50.)

**BOURRU.** By Jean des Vignes Rouges. (Dutton, \$2.50.)

The war is more truly with us, 10 years afterwards, than it was, I am afraid, while we were fighting it. It's a good thing, perhaps, to keep its sacrifices fresh in mind; and there is no glorification of the slaughter in the books we get these days.

Mr. Scanlon's and Mary Lee's books are the two which divided the 25 thousand dollar prize offered by the American Legion Monthly and Houghton, Mifflin. Both are the work of writers untrained in the art; both are such sincerely human and accurate documents that one reads them convinced that the prizes were properly bestowed.

Mr. Scanlon was a marine. His is a story of fighting. There is action in it from first to last; such action as was seen by his marine outfit, and it saw plenty. He gives faithful reporting of what the men in the fighting said, and thought and did. The book has great simplicity. It is moved by no such fine perception or high indignation as "All Quiet on the Western Front." But it is a memorable record.

Mary Lee's book is almost interminable. It goes on and on; fine print, 671 pages; a woman talking about the war, and—like a woman talking—never quitting. But it is, just the same, fine talk! She was a civilian employee of the army overseas and then a canteen worker. She saw and heard much. Her book is not so much a novel (nor is Mr. Scanlon's) as it is the recording of incident after incident. In it all she crams much about the war, without evasion or subterfuge.

The story of the war as seen by the youth of Germany, who were growing up when the conflict began, and who were too young to fight, is told in Ernst Glaeser's book, which is translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. It is another one of those German documents which reveal how clearly our recent enemy now realizes the costliness of war. Like "The Case of Sergeant Grischka," and like "All Quiet," "Class of 1902" is startlingly frank, revelatory, bitter.

"Bourru" is from the French—a book written at the height of the realization of war's futility, but when it was published, 10 years ago, the public had no stomach for food of this kind.

Now it comes upon a public ready for this type of book. It is an uncompromising, detailed story of the experiences of a platoon. It is a splendid book about the soldiers of France, and should stand beside these others in your shelf of war novels.

### THE HUSBAND OF XANTHIPPE

AND OTHER SHORT PLAYS.

By Conrad Seller. (Baker, \$1.60.)

A half dozen readable and act-

able short plays are included in this volume. Five of the plays are comedies, one a drama.

that we are claiming for busy women a finer calibre of character. But at least their interests are absorbed in other things than a neighbor's business. And if a woman is of any value as a worker she is apt to have learned the wisdom of attending to her own knitting. She may even love "choice bits," for don't we all? But there is a world of difference between gossip indulgence and being a tale bearer.

Suppose Mr. Jones is seen lunching with a blonde. What self-appointed duty is it of yours or mine to inform Mrs. Jones of the incident? The luncheon engagement may have a perfectly legitimate reason. But if it hasn't, it still is not the affair of any outsider, and certainly not one claiming to be a friend, to report the encounter to Mrs. Jones.

When one is tempted to tell the Mrs. Joneses what they ought to know for their own good the better course always is to tell oneself she had better mind her own business for her own good. No one is grateful for tales told. Even though facts support the case reported, the injured party maintains a resentment toward the informant. So there is no profit anywhere for the tale bearer. If it gets about that she is that sort of person, she becomes a social outcast. Confidences are withheld when she is around. Conversations are silently edited to cramp a known style of embroidering an insignificant incident.

We all know people whose expected company stirs up a warning to say nothing in her presence, because of her reputation for carrying tales. The vicious, of course, cannot be handled so easily, since there is no ducking-stone law in force as there was in the early days of our country. They are dangerous because they need no concrete evidence to start their malicious tongues. They do, however, meet their just rewards eventually just as any other criminal does. Maybe not in prison sentence but they learn to know what solitary confinement means. They are socially ostracized into it.

Anyway, since we all must admit to an occasion of temptation, at least, of not minding our own business, the idea of the week's experiment might be accepted for what it's worth. A resume of our busybody or anti-busybody activities might be awfully enlightening.

Mr. Babson suggests 20 new ways to make a million dollars, but they probably won't replace the good old sucker list.